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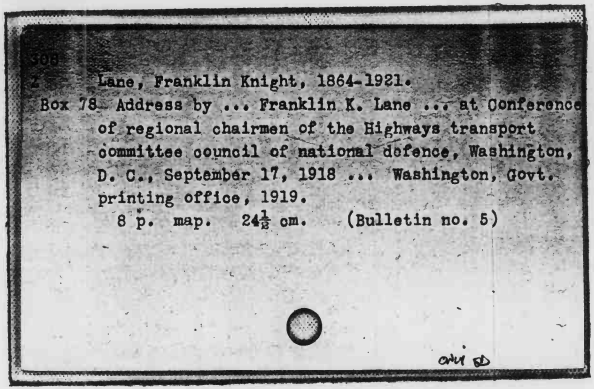
Lane, Franklin Knight, 1864-1921.
Box 78 Address by ... Franklin K. Lane ... at Conference of regional chairmen of the Highways transport committee council of national defence, Washington, D. C., September 17, 1918 ... Washington, Govt. printing office, 1919.
8 p. map. 24½ cm. (Bulletin no. 5)

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 11:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 2-26-97 INITIALS: MS

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BULLETIN No. 5

ADDRESS

BY

HONORABLE FRANKLIN K. LANE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

AT

CONFERENCE OF REGIONAL CHAIRMEN OF THE HIGHWAYS TRANSPORT COMMITTEE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C.
SEPTEMBER 17, 1918

RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

"The Council of National Defense approves the widest possible use of the motor truck as a transportation agency, and requests the State Councils of Defense and other State authorities to take all necessary steps to facilitate such means of transportation, removing any regulations that tend to restrict and discourage such use."

WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1919

Recognizing the national value of our highways in relation to, and properly coordinated with, other existing transportation mediums, and more particularly the necessity for their immediate development that they might carry their share of the war burden, the Highways Transport Committee was appointed by, and forms a part of, the Council of National Defense.

The object of the committee is to increase and render more effective all transportation over the highways as one of the means of strengthening the Nation's transportation system and relieving the railroads of part of the heavy short-haul freight traffic burden.

National policies are directed from the headquarters of the national committee in Washington to the highways transport committees of the several State Councils of Defense. These State organizations, which by proper subdivisions reach down through the counties to the communities, are grouped together into 11 regional areas, as shown by the map used above. The State committees of the different areas are assisted by and are under the direct supervision of the 11 regional chairmen of the Highways Transport Committee, Council of National Defense.

21 Apr 1920 Stru

COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE.

HIGHWAYS TRANSPORT COMMITTEE.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

ADDRESS BY HON. FRANKLIN K. LANE, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE CONFERENCE OF REGIONAL CHAIRMEN OF THE HIGHWAYS TRANSPORT COMMITTEE, SEPTEMBER 17, 1918.

I did not come to-day with the idea of bringing you anything new. On the contrary, I have come here to get the inspiration which association with those from the outside gives. There is no hope for this place unless we can keep in contact with the remainder of the United States. In isolation we think in a vacuum, and it is only when we know what you are thinking of on the outside that we get the impulse which leads to construction. I think I can say out of my knowledge of 12 years of administrative work in this city, that we have to look abroad, go up on the tops of the hills and see the great valleys of our country, before we know really what our policies should be. When we live alone or live in isolation and try to deal with things abstractly or theoretically we make mistakes.

The problem that you deal with is one that I have never had any contact with, but I know this from my knowledge of history; that you can judge the civilization of a nation, of a people, of a continent, or of any part of a nation, by the character of its highways. If you will think over that proposition you will realize that what I have said is true, that those parts of this Nation are most backward, where people live most alone, where they develop those diseases of the mind which come from living alone, where they develop supreme discontent with what is done at Washington or what is done in their own State legislatures, where they are unhappy and discontented, and movements that make against the welfare of our country arise, are those parts where there are poor highways and consequently a lack of communication between the people.

Our eyes are all turned at this time to the other side of the water. I suppose that there has never been a month in the history of the United States when so many people were so anxious to see the morning paper or the evening paper as during the past month. There never has been a time when we have been so thrilled to the very core of our beings. Achievements that those boys over there have made are things that will live in our memories.

And why has it been possible for France to carry on for four years a successful war against the greatest military power that the world has ever seen? Because France had the benefit of the engineering

skill and of the foresight of two men who are 1,800 years apart—Napoleon and Caesar. Those men built the roads of France. Without those roads, conceived and built originally by Caesar for the conquest of the Gauls and for the conquest of the Teutons, without the roads built by Napoleon to stand off the enemies of France and to make aggressions to the eastward, Paris would have fallen at least two years ago. So that you gentlemen who are engaged in the business of developing the highways of the country and putting them to greater use may properly conceive of yourselves as engaged in a very farsighted, important bit of statemanship, work that does not have its only concern as to the farmer of this country or the helping of freight movement during this winter alone, but may have consequences that will extend throughout the centuries. Take the instance of Verdun. Verdun would have fallen unquestionably if it had not been for the roads that Napoleon constructed and that France has maintained; for all the credit is not to go to the man who conceived and the man who constructed. This is one thing where we have been short always. One thing that the people of the United States do not realize. It is not sufficient to pay $25,000 a mile for a concrete foundation, but you must put aside 10 cents out of every dollar for the maintenance of these roads or your money has gone to waste and your conception is idle. And you gentlemen know, if you continue, as I hope you will, after the war, you will have not merely a function in the securing of the building of good roads, but will have a very great function in the maintaining of these roads as actual arteries in the system of transportation of the country. You remember that at Verdun the railroad was cut off, and Verdun was supported by the fact that she had trucks which could go 40 feet apart all night long over the great highway that had been built from Paris to the east.

Now I saw my first national service in connection with the Interstate Commerce Commission and I was much impressed by the theory that the railroad men had, which was a very natural theory, arising out of their own experience and out of the fact that there was a new force in the world with which they were playing. Their conception was that the highway was a mere means of getting from the farm to the railroad; that the waterway was a mere means of carrying off the surplus waters from the hills to the oceans. The statement has often been made to me that there would never be an occasion when it would be necessary or possible to put into competition with the railroads the waterways of this country; that it would cost more to use those waterways or to use highways than it would to do the same transportation work by railroad. And they had obtained figures to show that under conditions of unlimited competition the Illinois Central, for instance, paralleling the Mississippi River, could do business at a cheaper rate than it could be transported by water, considering the cost of bringing it to the water station and unloading it at the other end. Now, as Mr. Chapin has said, a larger conception has come into the American mind—the conception of the utilization of all our resources. While the railroad has a great burden cast upon it; while it is the strong right arm in this work, still we must remember that the strong right arm must have fingers, and that there should be in a complete physical system a good left arm.

The highways that you are interested in are more than interesting to me for another reason.

I have thought of the men who will come back after the war. Every nation has had a problem to deal with the returning solider. If you read Ferraro's history of Rome, you will find that one of the chief reasons why the republic of Rome went out of existence and the empire of Rome came into existence was because of the returned soldiers. They looked to their general to take care of them on their return, and their general found that the way to take care of them was to give them, as they said in those days, "bread and circuses," and so they reached over into Egypt, got the great wheat supply of that country, and provided the great circuses that are historical for the amusement of those people.

The Emperor of Germany 10 years ago was asked why he was unwilling to agree to a demobilization of his forces or to a reduction of his army and he said because it would demoralize the industries of Germany. They could not reabsorb so many men without reducing wages and throwing upon the country so many unemployed that it would make against the welfare of the land. We will have that problem to deal with.

The firm, strong position taken by the President in his note published yesterday indicates that he is ready to fight this thing out to a finish and that he will show to those on the other side that America has a determination to win, and that it is not a determination that fades quickly. If the Emperor of Germany has ever had a good look at a photograph of Woodrow Wilson, he has seen a prolongation of a chin that must have confirmed him in the belief that America does not take up a fight unless it puts it through; and we are to reach a military determination by whipping them until they say they have had enough.

Now, when this thing is over, our men will begin to come back into the United States. But not all at once. We won't have three or four million men to deal with in a single month. We will have them slowly returning to us through a year or a year and a half. As those men come filtering in through our ports we ought to be able to meet every man at every port with the statement that he does not have to lie idle one single day. We ought to be able to say to the man, "Here is something that you can do at once. If your old position is not vacant, if you can not go home to the old place and take up the work that you were in, then the Government of the United States, in its wisdom, has provided something which you can do at wages upon which you can live well."

And what should that be? The greatest problem that any country has, to my mind, is its own self-support. We have come to be independent in our resources, to be strong, and be respected. So long as we are industrially dependent, agriculturally dependent, somebody has a lever that he can use in a time of crisis, as against this nation. Long years ago we were the greatest of all agricultural people, and Thomas Jefferson wanted us to remain in that position. He thought that the safety and security of the United States lay in the fact that we would live on farms. When De Toquevile came over here in 1830 he said the reason democracy was a success in this country was because we were all practically living on farms, living on what we raised ourselves, and standing equally.

To-day the tendency is away from the farm toward the city, toward industrial life, toward aggregations of people, away from

the small town to the larger town, and from the larger town to the metropolis. People are being drawn from the farms, so that one-half of the arable land this side of the Mississippi is unused to-day; so that between here and New Orleans there are 40,000,000 acres of land privately owned and unused; so that in the great Northwest, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, etc., there are 100,000,000 acres of cut-over lands that are practically unused; and we have a new nation practically in the undrained lands of our rivers and our bays and inlets, lands that are as rich as any that lie out of doors, as rich as the valley of the Nile or of the Euphrates. In the far western country, there are at least 15,000,000 acres of land that we can put under water. Under water, that land produces more than one crop a year, and that an exceptionally rich crop.

We have been extending ourselves because of war in a great many different directions. The Government has taken to itself unprecedented and unthought-of powers because of the necessities of our condition. I say that to meet the problem of the returned soldier we ought to take advantage of this opportunity to do the work now that must eventually be done and reclaim these arid lands of the West. Turn the waters of the Colorado over the desert of Arizona, store those waters in the Grand River and in the Green River, and let them flow down at the right times on that desert so as to raise cotton and cantaloupes and alfalfa. Then come east and take the stumps from these cut-over lands. Do it not as a private enterprise, because that is a slow, slow process. Men are discouraged and disheartened when they look at the problem of pulling an Oregon fir stump out of the ground. It really requires large capital. Then come farther east and take these lands that are swamp, that need draining, and build ditches and dikes and put these lands into the service of America. This is what I call the making of the nation.

That land should tie up with all other land. Means of communication should be a part of that general scheme. We should have as good roads between the little farms in Mississippi or in South Carolina or in Northern Minnesota as we have in Maryland or in California. There is a work—the work that I have in mind, and for which Congress has made a small and tentative appropriation—the work of surveying this country and seeing how many of this Nation's land resources have not been mobilized and how best they can be used for providing homes for these men who come back, as well as adding to the wealth of the world. There is a work that ties up directly with your work, because I want to have small communities in which men have small acreages of land, not to speculate with but to cultivate; and these acreages are to center in small communities where men can talk together and profit by their own mistakes and their own successes and where those small communities will be tied up with all neighboring communities, so that there will be easy access between all parts of the country. Good roads and a rural express must be had. If you can help the Government in building good roads for little money or show how a rural express can be most profitably developed, you will be helping in the making of a new America.

And I can conceive of a United States that will be as rich per acre as France; in which the people will be divided into small communities, industrial communities as well as agricultural; for every one

of these little places ought to have its own creamery, its own cannery. The farmer is the poorest man in the world to develop any kind of cooperative scheme. He needs assistance and is always hampered by the lack of capital. But now is our chance to see what can be done; to show it in the building of ideal communities, communities that have good houses, that have good sanitation, that are on good land where there is somebody who can direct them as to what should be planted and what should be avoided, communities which may be connected up with the world by highways, by developing rivers, and by railroads.

Now, I think if there is one great fault that industrially we have been guilty of in the United States, it has been the effort to develop quantity at the expense of quality. We have been a wholesale Nation. We have had a continent that was rich beyond any precedent. We did not know what any acre of our land might produce. A man might go on it out in Oregon and think it was a fir land, think it was good for nothing but timber, and find first that it was the richest kind of dairying land, and find next that it contained a gold mine or a chrome mine. We have never known, and we do not know yet, what the riches of the United States are, and we won't know until we have put study and thought and money into the problem of making this country what it can be by the application of thought, energy and investment.

The United States is not going to be after the war as it has been. That is a thing that you sober men of business are already thinking about. We are never going to return to the idea that was. The man that comes back from this war will be treated by us with distinguished consideration, because he has taken a risk that we have not taken; that we have not had the opportunity to take, I am sorry to say. But that man is going to insist upon larger opportunity for himself, and the largest opportunity that he wants is an opportunity to make himself independent, and he is going to have a conception of a social America that we have not had. This war is a leveling force. When we adopted the draft, under the leadership of that man over there (Senator Chamberlain), we did a thing that was of the deepest and most far-reaching consequence. We did a thing that put the millionaire's boy and the lawyer's boy and the Cabinet official's boy alongside of the bootblack and the farmer and the street-car driver. It was the most essentially democratic thing that this country has ever done, and the spirit of the draft is going to continue after this war. Those boys are always going to look upon each other as brothers in arms, sympathetic toward each other.

Yesterday Mrs. Lane established a little hospital for convalescent soldiers, and as she was gathering up the 10 men she was taking into the hospital, one of the men from out West said: "Won't you take my chum? We left Colorado and went out to California together and took up a piece of land. When the war came on we went into the war together, and we fought together in France, and when we were making the charge together I saw him fall, struck by a bullet. I ran to pick him up and I got mine." Now, those two fellows are going to be tied together for life, and that is the relationship that will exist between all those men.

We men who are in politics to-day have seen our day. They are going to take charge of the politics of the United States. They are

going to take charge of the social problems. They are going to insist upon industrial as well as social equality. We know that this does not necessarily mean that the Nation must be run by them because they were soldiers, not unless they have the quality that gives them foresight and good sense. But now we should prepare for them. We must realize that these men are all comrades, that they are going to work together, and we ought to spread this feeling throughout the entire country. The fighting men themselves ought to get the feeling that we who have been left behind are also in the service of the country, trying to do something large for the making of this Nation along real lines.

You know that there is a big man and a little man in each one of us; and the little man had his day. He was the selfish, egotistic, narrow, money-making fellow. Just as soon as this country went into the war the big man came out. The big man inside of us was challenged and he arose at once and responded. And so we found railroad presidents, and bankers, the automobile men, and the business men of the country coming down to Washington and saying we want our opportunity to help. It was not selfish; it was noble. And that spirit if carried out will make this country a new land in which these boys who come back will find they have been cared for; that helpfulness has come to take the place of indifference and cooperation to supplement individual initiative.

MSH 21190

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